

Henderson, Kentucky
Tuesday, October 22, 2002

Approximately 15 people participated in the Henderson public forum – all of whom were there because they had been asked to display organizational materials or entertain during the informal session, many of whom stayed reluctantly to create a discussion group, several of whom left before the last full group discussion. This was in spite of good publicity and considerable time and energy invested by the Arts Alliance in promotional activities. The site was well organized with displays, attractive food, and music. There was front page newspaper coverage the following day.

They chose two of the KAC goals for small group sessions. A summary of key discussion points:

Goal # 1: Lifelong education in the arts

- There is a critical need for more early childhood education in the arts, including more formal, hands-on arts instruction in the elementary grades.
- Teachers need more/better professional development opportunities in the arts.
- The KY Arts Council needs to identify/promote model educational programs from around the state.
- The general public needs a much greater awareness of the link between arts experiences and educational achievement.
- Public school curricula need to integrate more art into all classroom experiences, i.e. reading, writing, illustrating, etc.

Goal # 4: The role of the arts in society is valued as basic to life

- The importance of arts needs continued emphasis as a critical variable in attracting new businesses and people to the community.
- There is a need for increased KAC leadership in generating educational, technical, and financial resources to support the arts
- A community needs a multitude of arts related events/facilities/venues to reach a broad variety of individuals and families.
- Community pride and community identity are highly influenced by the community's connection with the arts.
- Kentucky needs a significantly greater commitment to the arts in public schools, e.g. trained visual arts teachers at each school, but the arts are marginally funded because of limited public support (need more effective advocacy by KAC)
- KAC should research more effective methods for linking the creative impulse with analytical, critical thinking skills -- and demonstrate the practical connection with jobs, careers, and hobbies.

Eight to ten people remained to discuss the four KLTPRC survey issues and links with KAC goals. Their key points:

Safe and caring communities:

- “Community” activities make us feel connected; family-oriented/traditional arts are equalizers, and make people feel comfortable, at ease

Responsibility for family success

- Arts experiences for children can lead to lifelong love of the arts and bring families together.
- Early arts experiences can overcome the stigma of “talent necessary to participate.” Art must be experienced as a process, not a product.
- The tradition of arts within the family can reinforce an individual’s self confidence and family unity.
- Are we leaving out sectors of our community?

Accessible, quality health care

- Art is preventative maintenance – by being involved we feel/are healthier/takes us outside of ourselves

Excellent system of life-long learning

- Art is not totally a free service: we need to value, pay our artists.
- The arts need to be emphasized early and throughout life.

Other comments:

Opening up untapped artistic skills through classes/workshops can enhance our lives/communities (The model discussed was the John C. Campbell Folk School in North Carolina). Can this happen in our community? Our state?